Soumyanarayana (or, Chenna Keshava) temple, Belur, Karnataka

Info is given under following headings:

Location, address, phone, how to get there. Greatness of this temple. Legends and history. Architecture of temple deities. Sub-deities, daily rituals and poojas and their charges ..special poojas and rituals and their charges.. festivals, facilities for devotees...like accommodation etc. Donation info and bank acct number etc. Nearby temples. Other tourist attractions. Nearby budget hotels. Any other info...etc

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AI Overview

The Chennakeshava Temple in Belur, Karnataka, is a 12th-century masterpiece of Hoysala architecture dedicated to Lord Vishnu, commissioned by King Vishnuvardhana in 1117 CE. Renowned for its intricate soapstone carvings, star-shaped plan, and 80+ *Madanika* sculptures, it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an active temple, often called the "Shining Jewel of Belur".

Key Features and Highlights:

- **Architecture:** Built on a raised platform (*jagati*), the temple features exquisite, detailed carvings of scenes from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas, as well as 24 forms of Vishnu.
- **Sculptures:** The temple is famous for its 48 intricately carved, unique pillars and over 80 *Madanika* figures (dancing, hunting, or posing). The *Darpana Sundari* (lady with a mirror) is a, particularly renowned sculpture.
- **Location & Significance:** Located on the banks of the Yagachi River in Hassan district, about 220 km from Bengaluru. It is part of the "Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas" UNESCO site, along with temples in Halebeedu.
- **Construction:** The temple took 103 years to complete and was crafted by master artists Dasoja and Chavana.
- **Visitor Info:** Open from 6 AM to 6 PM, with free entry. The best time to visit is October to March.

The temple complex also houses the Kappe Chennigaraya temple, Soumyanayaki temple, and a deepastambha (pillar)

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Location, Address, Phone, How to Get There

The temple (officially Sri Chennakeshava Swamy Temple, also known as Chennakeshava / Keshava / Vijayanarayana Temple) is in Belur town, Belur Taluk, Hassan District, Karnataka, on the banks of the Yagachi River.

Address: Temple Road / Belur, Karnataka 573115 (or Sri Chennakeshava Swamy Temple, Belur Taluk, Hassan District).

Phone: Executive Officer – 08177-222218 (main temple office contact).

How to Reach:

By Road: 38 km northwest of Hassan (1 hour by bus/taxi); 220 km from Bengaluru (3.5–4 hours via 4-lane NH75). Regular KSRTC buses and taxis from Hassan, Bengaluru, or nearby towns like Chikmagalur. Belur has its own bus stand just 0.5 km from the temple.

By Rail: Nearest station is Hassan (connected to Bengaluru, Mysuru, Mangaluru, etc.); taxis/auto from there.

By Air: Bengaluru International Airport (220 km); no direct airport in Hassan or Belur.

Greatness of This Temple

This is one of the finest and best-preserved examples of 12th-century Hoysala architecture in Karnataka — an active, living Vaishnava temple that is part of the “Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas” (along with Halebidu and Somanathapura), inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2023.

Its soapstone carvings are regarded as masterpieces of Indian temple art, often compared to an “open-air museum” or “stone poetry.”

Over 1,000 artisans worked on it, and many signed their names on the sculptures. It remains a major pilgrimage centre and tourist icon, drawing devotees and architecture lovers worldwide for its spiritual sanctity and artistic brilliance.

Legends and History

Commissioned in 1117 CE (consecrated 1116/1117) by Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana to celebrate his victory over the Cholas at Talakad (and reportedly to mark his conversion from Jainism to Vaishnavism under Ramanujacharya’s influence).

It is also called Vijayanarayana (“victorious Narayana”) in inscriptions.

Construction spanned three generations and took about 103 years.

Master sculptors included Dasoja and his son Chavana (from Balligave). Queen Shantala Devi (Vishnuvardhana's wife) is believed to be the model for the famous "Darpana Sundari" (mirror-holding maiden) sculpture.

The temple faced invasions (Malik Kafur, Delhi Sultanate) but was repaired by Vijayanagara kings, Hyder Ali's period, Wadiyars, and later Mysore government.

Inscriptions (over 100) record grants and repairs up to the 18th century.

Architecture of the Temple & Main Deity

Classic Hoysala style (Karnata Dravida) on a star-shaped jagati (platform) with chloritic schist (soapstone) that allows incredibly fine carving.

Features: 7-storey Vijayanagara-era gopuram entrance, open mantapa with 48 lathe-turned pillars (some with miniature carvings that rotate), perforated stone screens, horizontal friezes (elephants, lions, dancers, musicians, Ramayana/Mahabharata/Purana scenes), 38 surviving madanakai (celestial nymph/salabhanjika) bracket figures on the ceiling, and detailed narrative panels.

The original shikhara (tower) is missing.

The sanctum houses the **main 6-ft standing idol of Lord Chennakeshava** (handsome Kesava/Vishnu) — four-armed, holding chakra, shankha, gada and lotus, in a serene, beautiful form on a pedestal with Dashavatara carvings in the halo.

Sub-Deities

The complex includes several subsidiary shrines/temples:

- Kappe Chennigaraya (south) – Another Vishnu form (Venugopala/Chennigaraya); built by Queen Shantala Devi.
- Soumyanayaki (southwest) – Lakshmi as Soumyanayaki (serene/beautiful Lakshmi; this may relate to the "Soumyanarayana" reference in the query).
- Andal / Ranganayaki temple (northwest).
- Viranarayana temple (west).
- Smaller shrines for Narasimha, Rama, Krishna, Alvars, Ramanuja, Garuda, etc.
- Ganapathi sannidhi also present.

Daily Rituals, Poojas & Charges (approximate/current as per recent sources; confirm on-site as they may change)

Temple timings (general darshan): roughly 7:00 AM–1:00 PM and 2:00 PM–8:00 PM (or 7:30 AM–7:30 PM).

General entry/darshan is free. Shoes/parking have nominal charges.

Daily poojas/sevas at Sri Chennakeshava Sannidhi (examples):

- Thulasi Astottara: ₹15
- Thulasi Sahasra Nama: ₹100
- Coconut Seva + Mangalarathi: ₹5
- Holy Coconut / Hannu Thuppa Seva: ₹10
- Garuda Prasada: ₹20
- Mula Devara Abhisheka: ₹2,000
- Utsava Murthi Abhisheka: ₹1,000
- Dolotsava: ₹1,000
- Hannerdu Mangalarathi: ₹750

At Sri Soumyanayaki Ammanavara Sannidhi:

- Kumkuma Astottara / Sahasra Nama: ₹15 / ₹100
- Ammanavara Abhisheka: ₹2,000 (utsava murthy ₹1,250)
- Other common sevas: Kivi Chuchuudhu ₹100, Upanayana ₹200, Marriage Kanike ₹500, Vehicle pooja (bike etc.) ₹100–5,000, various prasadha offerings ₹250–750.
- Ganapathi sannidhi has separate small archana/abhisheka (₹20–600).

Special Poojas, Rituals & Charges

Many utsavas/festive sevas (examples): Belligarudotsava, Lakshmi Utsava, Shayanotsava, Theppotsava, Kalyanotsava (₹1,250–10,000+), Mahabhisheka ₹2,000, Pushpa Mantapotsava ₹2,500, etc. Kalyanotsava (divine wedding) is popular at ₹5,000. Special alankaras (Mohini, Surya/Chandra mandala, etc.) ₹2,500 each.
Book in advance for major ones.

Festivals

Main festival:

Chennakeshava Rathotsava / Brahmotsavam / Car Festival (usually March–April or specific dates like August in some years) — grand chariot procession (unique tradition includes Maulvi reciting from Quran at start, reflecting historical harmony).
Vaikuntha Ekadashi, Ugadi, Makara Sankranti, Janmashtami, Ramanuja Jayanti, etc.
Other annual utsavas: Belli Garudotsava, Theppotsava (float festival), various alankara and vahana utsavas.

Facilities for Devotees (Accommodation, etc.)

The temple has a kalyana mantapa, a community kitchen (historical pakasale), and basic pilgrim facilities. No large on-site guest house mentioned.

Nearby government accommodation: KSTDC Hotel Mayura Velapuri (5-minute walk from temple) — budget-friendly with AC/non-AC rooms, dormitories, restaurant (rates approx. ₹1,500–4,200 depending on room type/weekday-weekend; check kstdc.co for latest).
Cloak room, drinking water, and basic rest areas available in the complex.

Donation Info and Bank Account

No public bank account details or online donation portal found for general donations/hundi (common for many Karnataka temples; donations are usually made in person at the hundi or counter).
For specific endowments, sevas, or major donations, contact the Executive Officer directly (08177-222218) or visit the temple office. The temple falls under the Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions & Charitable Endowments Department.

Nearby Temples

Within the Belur complex: Kappe Chennigaraya, Soumyanayaki, Andal, Viranarayana.
Halebidu Hoysaleswara Temple (Shiva) – 16 km (must-visit Hoysala twin).

Other Hoysala temples in the region (Somanathapura Keshava ~170 km, etc.).

Other Tourist Attractions

- Yagachi River / Dam area for scenic views.
- Belur town market and Hoysala heritage trail.
- Combined Belur–Halebidu day trip is very popular.

Nearby Budget Hotels (approx. ₹1,000–3,000 range)

KSTDC Mayura Velapuri (as above, most convenient).

Vishnu Regency, Hoysala Serenity Stay, Capital O Hotel Samanvi International, Water View Holiday Retreat, Vishwas Comforts, etc. (many within 1–2 km; book via Booking.com, MakeMyTrip or directly).
Check recent reviews for cleanliness and proximity to the temple.

Any Other Info

- Photography allowed in outer areas (check rules inside sanctum).
- Best time to visit: Oct–March (pleasant weather); avoid peak summer.
- Wear traditional attire if possible for pooja; modest clothing required.
- The temple is well-maintained by ASI + state endowments; guided tours (English/Kannada) available informally or via local guides.
- Combine with Halebidu for a full Hoysala experience (highly recommended).
- For the absolute latest pooja charges, timings, or bookings, call the Executive Officer or visit the temple.

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Ref: ChatGpt

Sri Soumyanarayana (Chenna Keshava) Temple, Belur, Karnataka

1. **Location**

Place: Belur
Taluk: Belur
District: Hassan
State: Karnataka – 573115
Country: India

Temple Name: Sri Chennakeshava Temple (also called Soumyanarayana Temple)

Temple Office Phone:

+91-8177-222218 (Belur Temple Office – may change; advisable to verify before publishing)

Managed by: Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) & Muzrai Department, Govt. of Karnataka

2. **How to Get There**

By Road:
38 km from Hassan
16 km from Chikkamagaluru
220 km from Bengaluru
Well connected by KSRTC buses from Hassan, Mysuru, Bengaluru and Mangaluru.

By Rail:
Nearest Railway Station: Hassan Junction (HAS) – 38 km

By Air:
Nearest Airport: Mangaluru International Airport – approx. 170 km
Bengaluru Airport – approx. 220 km

3. **Greatness of This Temple**

- One of the finest examples of Hoysala architecture in India.
- Built in 1117 AD by King Vishnuvardhana of the Hoysala dynasty.
- Dedicated to Lord Vishnu as Chennakeshava (“Handsome Vishnu”).
- Constructed to commemorate:
- The Hoysala victory over the Cholas.
- The king’s conversion from Jainism to Vaishnavism under Sri Ramanujacharya’s influence.
- The temple took over 100 years to complete.

It is often described as “poetry carved in stone.

4. **Legends and History**

🔹 **Historical Background**

Built by Hoysala King Vishnuvardhana.

His queen Shantala Devi, a great dancer, is associated with the temple's sculptural excellence.

The temple was the capital shrine of the Hoysalas before Halebidu.

🔹 **Legend**

The idol of Chennakeshava is believed to be very ancient and was installed after elaborate Vedic rituals.

Some traditions say Vishnu manifested here in a Soumya (gentle and pleasing) form, hence the name Soumyanarayana.

5. **Architecture of the Temple**

This is the highlight of Belur.

⭐ **Architectural Style:**

Hoysala architecture
Built using chloritic schist (soapstone) – allows minute detailing.

⭐ **Key Features**:

- Star-shaped platform (Jagati)
- Exquisite outer wall carvings
- 650+ elephants carved at the base
- Friezes depicting:
- Ramayana
- Mahabharata
- Bhagavata
- Bracket figures (Madanikas / Shilabalikas) – world famous
- Lathe-turned polished pillars inside the mantapa
- The famous Narasimha pillar
- Each sculpture is unique — no two are identical.

6. **Main Deity**

🟡 **Lord Chennakeshava (Soumyanarayana)**
Standing Vishnu form
About 6 feet tall

Holds:
Chakra
Shankha
Gada
Padma
The idol is majestic and extremely graceful.

7. **Sub-Deities**

Within the complex:

- Sri Andal
- Sri Lakshmi
- Sri Venugopala
- Sri Narasimha
- Sri Rama
- Garuda shrine
- Kappe Chennigaraya Temple (smaller but equally beautiful)

8. **Daily Rituals & Poojas**

Temple Timings:
Morning: 7:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Evening: 4:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Daily Poojas:

- Suprabhata
- Alankara
- Archana
- Naivedya
- Mangala Harathi
- Since it is an ASI monument, elaborate rituals are comparatively limited.

Approximate Seva Charges (subject to change):

- Archana – ₹25 to ₹50
- Special Archana – ₹100+
- Sahasranama Archana – ₹150 to ₹250
- (Exact rates to be confirmed locally before publishing.)

9. **Special Poojas and Rituals**

- Vaikunta Ekadashi special pooja
- Sri Krishna Janmashtami
- Rama Navami
- Narasimha Jayanti
- Annual Brahmotsava
- Charges vary depending on seva category and offerings.

10. **Festivals**

Major Festivals:

- Vaikunta Ekadashi
- Rama Navami
- Krishna Janmashtami
- Narasimha Jayanti
- Hoysala Utsava (Cultural Festival)
- Annual Car Festival (Rathotsava)
- During festivals, thousands of devotees visit.

11. **Facilities for Devotees**

Basic rest rooms
Drinking water
Prasada counter
Shoe stand
Guides available
Photography allowed outside (restricted inside sanctum)

Accommodation:

- Belur has many lodges and hotels.
- Nearby:
- Karnataka Tourism (KSTDC) Mayura Velapuri
- Private lodges
- Homestays

12. **Donation Information**

Since it is under ASI:
Donations are usually accepted at temple counters.
No publicly advertised bank account for online transfer.
Offerings can be made through temple offices or hundi.
(Recommend verifying before publishing.)

13. Nearby Temples

- Sri Hoysaleswara Temple – Halebidu (16 km)
- Sri Veera Narayana Temple – Belavadi
- Lakshmi Narasimha Temple – Javagal
- Kedareswara Temple – Halebidu

14. **Other Tourist Attractions**

- Halebidu
- Shravanabelagola

- Chikkamagaluru hill stations
- Mullayanagiri
- Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary

15. **Nearby Budget Hotels**

- KSTDC Mayura Velapuri
- Hotel Suvarna Regency
- Hotel Vishnu Regency
- Several budget lodges in Belur town
- Tariff range: ₹800 – ₹2500 approx.

16. **Temple Timings for Tourists (Important Note)**

As an ASI monument:
Entry tickets may apply for non-worship areas.
Free for devotees during darshan hours.

17. **Special Note for the Ebook**

This temple is ideal for: ✔ Architecture lovers
✔ Vaishnava devotees
✔ History enthusiasts
✔ Sculptural art researchers

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Ref: Google Gemini

The Chennakeshava Temple (also known as the Vijayanarayana Temple) in Belur is one of the most magnificent examples of Hoysala architecture and a designated UNESCO World Heritage site.

Here is the detailed information:

1. **Location & Connectivity**

* Address: Temple Road, Belur, Hassan District, Karnataka - 573115.
* Phone: +91-8177222218 | Email: belurckstemple@gmail.com

*** How to Get There**:

* By Road: Well-connected to Hassan (40 km), Chikmagalur (25 km), and Bengaluru (220 km). Regular KSRTC buses ply from these cities.

* **By Rail**: The nearest major railway station is Hassan (40 km).

* **By Air:** The nearest airport is Mangalore (170 km) or Bengaluru (230 km).

2. **Greatness, Legends & History**

* **The Legend:** Built by King Vishnuvardhana in 1117 CE to commemorate his victory over the Cholas in the Battle of Talakad. It is said to have taken 103 years and three generations to complete.

* **Historical Significance**: It was the first of the three great Hoysala temples (along with Halebidu and Somanathapura) and served as a symbol of the empire's power and religious devotion.

3. **Architecture & Deities**

* **The Architecture**: Built using soapstone (chloritic schist), which allowed for intricate carving.

It features a unique star-shaped (stellate) platform (Jagati) and the Vesara style (a blend of North and South Indian styles).

* **Main Deity**: The sanctum houses a 6-foot-tall idol of Lord Chennakeshava (a form of Lord Vishnu) holding the Shanka, Chakra, Gada, and Padma.

* **Unique Features:**

* The 42 Madanikas (Shilabalikas): Exquisite carvings of dancing damsels in various poses.

* **Gravity Pillar:** A 42-foot-tall pillar in the courtyard that stands on its own weight without a foundation.

* **Narasimha Pillar:** A highly ornate pillar that used to rotate in ancient times.

4. *Sub-Deities & Rituals*

* **Sub-Deities**: The complex includes the Kappe Chennigaraya Temple, Soumya Nayaki Temple (Shrine of the Goddess), and Andal Shrine.

* **Daily Rituals**: * Opening: 7:30 AM | Closing: 7:30 PM (Sanctum closes briefly from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM).
* Morning Aarti: 7:00 AM – 7:30 AM
* Abhisheka: 7:30 AM
* Evening Aarti: 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM

* **Seva Charges (Approximate):**

* Mula Devara Abhisheka: ₹2,000
* Utsava Murthy Abhisheka: ₹1,000
* Tulasi Archana: ₹15 – ₹100
* Kalyanotsava: ₹5,000

5. **Festivals & Facilities**

* **Major Festivals**: * Car Festival (Rathotsava): Held in March/April (Phalguna month), drawing thousands of devotees.

* **Vaikuntha Ekadashi**: Celebrated with great fervor in December/January.

* **Facilities**: Basic facilities like drinking water and restrooms are available.

For accommodation, pilgrims usually stay in nearby KSTDC hotels or private lodges.

6. **Donations & Nearby Attractions**

* **Donations**: You can contribute at the temple office. While general online donation links for the Muzrai department exist, it is safest to obtain the current bank details directly from the temple's executive office via the phone number provided above to ensure accuracy

* **Nearby Temples:**
  * Hoysaleswara Temple, Halebidu (16 km)
  * Veera Narayana Temple, Belavadi (27 km)
  * Lakshmi Devi Temple, Doddagaddavalli (25 km)
* Other Attractions: Yagachi Dam (water sports), Shravanabelagola (Jain pilgrimage, 90 km), and the coffee plantations of Chikmagalur.

7. **Budget Hotels Nearby**

* KSTDC Hotel Mayura Velapuri: State-run, located very close to the temple.
* Hotel Sunshine International: Standard budget rooms.
* Guru Comforts: Reliable and economical for families.
* Vishnu Regency: Located within walking distance of the temple.

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Building on the earlier overview, **here is a deeper dive into the mystical legends, specific rituals, and the latest fee structure for sevas at the Chennakeshava Temple.**

1. **Legends & Mythical History**

* **The Architect's Rivalry (Jakanachari & Dankanachari):** The most famous legend involves the legendary sculptor Jakanachari.
While he was carving the main idol, his son Dankanachari (who he didn't know was his son) claimed the stone was "defective."
Infuriated, Jakanachari vowed to cut off his own hand if the boy was right.
When they applied sandalwood paste to the idol, it dried everywhere except at the navel, revealing a toad inside—a sign of a flawed stone.
True to his word, Jakanachari cut off his hand. Later, after building the Kappe Chennigaraya temple, his hand was miraculously restored.

* **The Victory of Talakad**: History meets legend here. It is said King Vishnuvardhana built the temple not just for victory, but also as a "rival" to his former overlord, the Chalukyan King Vikramaditya VI, to show that the Hoysalas had surpassed them in artistic and military might.

* **Conversion of the King**: Another popular narrative is that the temple was a grand offering following the King's conversion from Jainism to Vaishnavism under the influence of the great saint Ramanujacharya.

2. **Daily Poojas & Rituals**

The temple follows traditional Pancharatra Agama rituals. The deity is treated as a living "Handsome Lord" (Chenna = Handsome, Keshava = Vishnu).

Ritual	Time (Approx.)	Significance
Nirmalya Visarjana	7:00 AM	Removal of previous day's flowers.
Abhisheka	7:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Holy bath for the main deity and Utsava Murthy.
Maha Mangalarathi	12:30 PM – 1:00 PM	The main noon offering before the sanctum closes.
Evening Sevas	6:30 PM – 7:30 PM	Deepotsava (lighting of lamps) and final Aarti.

3. **Seva List & Charges (Estimated for 2026)**

Note: Prices are subject to minor changes by the Muzrai Department (Government of Karnataka).

Standard Daily Sevas

* Thulasi Archana: ₹15 – ₹25
* Sahasranama Archana: ₹100
* Coconut/Fruit Offering (Hannu-Kayiseve): ₹10 – ₹20
* Panchamrutha Abhisheka: ₹600

Special & Grand Sevas

* Mula Devara Abhisheka (Main Deity): ₹2,000
* Utsava Murthy Abhisheka: ₹1,000
* Ammanavara (Goddess) Abhisheka: ₹1,250 – ₹2,000
* Kalyanotsava (Marriage Ceremony): ₹5,000
* Belligarudothsava (Silver Garuda Chariot): ₹1,250
* Dolotsava (Unjal Seve/Cradle Ceremony): ₹1,000 – ₹1,300

4. **Unique Architectural Icons**

* **Darpana Sundari (The Beauty with a Mirror):** This is the most famous Madanika sculpture. **Legend says** she was modeled after Queen Shantala Devi, the king’s wife, who was a renowned dancer.

* **The Movable Bangle:** In the sculpture of Shuka Bhashini (the lady talking to a parrot), there is a stone bangle on her arm that can actually be moved up and down—a feat of incredible 12th-century engineering.

* **Gravity Test**: The Gravity Pillar (Mahasthambha) in the courtyard is often demonstrated by guides who pass a thin piece of paper or cloth completely under one side of the pillar, showing it is balanced only by its own weight.

5. **Important Visitor Notes**

* **Guide Fees**: Expect to pay between ₹300 and ₹700 for a licensed guide. It is highly recommended to hire one to understand the stories behind the 4,000+ carvings.

* **Entry Fees**: While darshan is free, the ASI charges a nominal fee for the complex (approx. ₹25 for Indians, ₹300 for foreigners).

* **Photography**: Usually allowed in the complex, but strictly prohibited inside the inner sanctum (Garbhagriha).

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Here is the detailed **information regarding administrative contacts, specific sevas, and the associated costs as of early 2026.**

1. **Administrative & Booking Contacts**

Since the temple is managed by the Muzrai Department (Government of Karnataka), most special sevas are booked at the counter or via the official administrative office.

* **Primary Contact Number**: +91-8177222218

* **Executive Office Email**: belurckstemple@gmail.com

* **Administrative Address**: Executive Officer, Sri Channakeshava Swamy Temple, Temple Road, Belur - 573115.
* **Online Portal**: You can check the Integrated Temple Management System (ITMS) Karnataka for updated e-services and official bank details for donations.

2. **Detailed Seva List & Charges**
The temple offers a range of sevas, from simple offerings to elaborate rituals.

Daily & Regular Sevas

Seva Name	Charge (Approx.)	Description
Thulasi Archana	₹15	Offering of Tulsi leaves with chanting.
Kumkumarchana	₹20	Offered to Goddess Soumya Nayaki.
Sahasranama Archana	₹100	Chanting of 1,000 names of the Lord.
Panchamrutha Abhisheka	₹600	Bathing the deity with five holy substances.
Hannerdu Mangalarathi	₹750	A grand ritual involving twelve lamps.

Special & Ritualistic Sevas

Seva Name	Charge (Approx.)	Remarks
Mula Devara Abhisheka	₹2,000	Main deity ritual; usually requires prior booking.
Ammanavara Abhisheka	₹2,000	For the shrine of the Goddess.
Kalyanotsava	₹5,000	Ceremonial wedding of the Lord and Goddess.
Belligarudothsava	₹1,250	Silver Garuda chariot procession.
Dolotsava	₹1,000	The swing/cradle ceremony for the deity.

Prasada Seva (Food Offerings)

If you wish to sponsor a food offering (Naivedya) to be distributed:

* Sweet Pongal / Ravekshira: ₹750
* Uppu Pongal / Puliyogare: ₹500
* Lemon Chithranna: ₹250

3. **Deep-Dive into Legends**

* **The Sweat of the Lord**: Legend says that during the summer months, a small amount of "sweat" appears on the brow of the Chennakeshava idol, which priests wipe away during the morning rituals. This is attributed to the "living" nature of the idol.

* **The Queen's Dance**: Queen Shantala Devi was a "Natya Rani" (Dancing Queen).
It is believed she used to perform in the Navaranga (the central hall).

The circular stone platform in the center of the hall is polished smooth not just by time, but by her legendary dance performances.

* **The Architectural Challenge:** The sculptor Dasoja and his son Chavana were so skilled that they would often compete. One legend states that the father carved a figure so perfect that the son had to carve a more intricate one just to prove he had learned the craft well.

4. **Practical Advice for Devotees**

* **Timing**: To witness Abhisheka, arrive by 7:00 AM. The temple atmosphere is most serene during these early hours before the tourist crowds arrive around 10:30 AM.
* **Donations**: To ensure your donation reaches the temple directly, always ask for a Government (Muzrai) Receipt at the office. Avoid giving large sums to unauthorized persons.
* **Guide Tip**: If you hire a guide, ask them specifically to show you the "Gravity Pillar" and the "Mirror-holding Lady" (Darpana Sundari).

“Must see” carvings

When you step into the Chennakeshava Temple, you are essentially entering a "stone library" of 12th-century art. While there are thousands of carvings, these are the absolute must-see masterpieces that define the genius of the Hoysala sculptors:

1. **The Madanikas (Bracket Figures)**

There are 42 of these "Celestial Nymphs," inspired by Queen Shantala Devi.

* **Darpana Sundari (**The Beauty with a Mirror): The most iconic carving. Look closely at her fingernails and the mirror's handle—the detail is microscopic.
* **Shuka Bhashini** (Lady with the Parrot): A lady talking to a pet parrot. The miracle here: There is a stone bangle on her wrist that is carved separately from the arm; it can actually be moved up and down.
* **The Huntress**: A woman with a bow and arrow. Notice her focused expression and the muscle tension in her legs.
* **Lady and the Lizard**: Look for a sculpture of a lady holding a bowl of fruit. You can see a tiny fly sitting on the fruit, and a lizard poised nearby, ready to catch it.

2. **The Famous Pillars (Inside the Hall)**

* **Narasimha Pillar**: The most intricate pillar in the temple. It is covered from top to bottom with miniature carvings of all the deities. Legend says it used to rotate on ball bearings. Look for the tiny Kadali-Basava (a bull) the size of a chickpea (Bengal gram).

* **Mohini Pillar**: A 16-fluted star-shaped pillar featuring a stunning life-size carving of Mohini (the female avatar of Vishnu). The jewelry on this figure is carved with such precision that it looks like real lace.

* **The Lathe-Turned Pillars:** Many pillars appear perfectly circular and smooth. Historians are still puzzled how 12th-century artisans used "stone lathes" to achieve such a mirror-like finish.

3. **The External Walls (Horizontal Bands)**

As you walk around the temple (Pradakshina), look at the horizontal rows at the base:

* **The Elephant Band**: The bottom-most row features 650 elephants. Look closely—no two elephants are in the same pose; each has a unique expression, symbolizing strength holding up the temple.

* **The Lion Band**: Above the elephants are lions, symbolizing courage.

* **The Horse Band**: Symbolizing speed and energy.

4. **Other Key Highlights**

* **The Hoysala Emblem**: Located at the entrance, it depicts Sala (the founder) stabbing a tiger. This is the visual origin story of the "Hoy Sala" (Strike, Sala!) name.

* **The Gravity Pillar (Mahasthambha**): In the open courtyard, this 42-foot pillar stands on its own weight. Your guide might show you how a piece of paper can pass completely under one side of its base.

* **The Ceiling (Navaranga):** Don't forget to look up! The central ceiling is an inverted lotus dome with Narasimha carved right in the center, appearing to jump out at the viewer.

Pro-Tip: If you can, visit during the "Golden Hour" (early morning or late afternoon).

The soapstone has a unique property where it glows with a soft, metallic sheen under low sunlight, making the carvings look almost alive.

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Photos

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Videos

Chennakeshava temple, Belur (10 min):

https://youtu.be/SYuG95edigU?si=HrXA8UXVGAQZ6kSy

Chennakeshava temple, Belur (10 min):

https://youtu.be/SYuG95edigU?si=HWsE7PAGupIj54Cp

Chennakeshava temple, Belur…poetry in stone (0.30 min):

https://m.facebook.com/groups/1118257261848384/permalink/2562490717425024/?mibextid=Nif5oz

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